

# Is ESP Really Part of a Soviet 'Secret Weapon'?

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By Flora Lewis

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RIS — An emigre Soviet physicist says that the Soviet Union has been doing secret work in parapsychology with what appear to be military and police purposes.

French scientist and former intelligence agent, Jacques Bergier, written that extrasensory perception, one of the theories studied in parapsychology, may be used in espionage, thought control, surveillance and as a form of weapon.

The Soviet emigre, August Stern, son of Dr. Mikhail Stern, an endocrinologist who was imprisoned for being allowed to leave the Soviet Union in March, August Stern spent several years in a secret Siberian laboratory in the late 1960s trying to find a physical basis for psychic energy — or "psi particles."

Soviet concern on the issue was demonstrated recently in the case of Albert C. Toth, the Los Angeles Times newspaperman interrogated in Moscow by the KGB and accused of having received "state secrets" about parapsychology.

THE INCIDENT had the earmarks of entrapment in the view of diplomats and others. There is no sign the age document on parapsychology

handed Toth just before he was seized contained important information. However, there is a record of Soviet sensitivity and August Stern's information indicates that parapsychology is a matter of concern to the authorities.

Stern, who now lives in Paris, said he was told before leaving the Soviet Union two years ago that an even more secret laboratory than the one he knew in Siberia had been set up in Moscow under the direction of the KGB.

Parapsychology covers four specific fields of nonphysical phenomena. They are telepathy (transmission of thought without use of the senses), extrasensory perception, telekinesis (transmission of motion without any evident use of physical energy) and clairvoyance (the ability to see distant or future events without physical intervention).

Most scientists remain skeptical such phenomena actually exist, but there are researchers throughout the world dedicated to proving them.

SOVIET RESEARCH has gone on for years, sometimes publicly vaunted and at other times denounced and even denied.

At one time in the late 1850s and early 1860s, the U.S. Navy and the

Stanford Research Institute did experiments in telepathy to see whether it could provide an undetectable means of communicating with submarines. So far as is known, the experiments failed. But word of them reached Moscow and apparently provoked high-level interest.

In 1975 some Soviet parapsychologists were persecuted and the whole subject was publicly attacked. Eduard Naumov, a researcher, was tried on a charge of accepting fees for lectures without permission, and was sentenced to two years in labor camp. His colleagues were dismissed from their jobs and otherwise harassed. At the trial much was made of the fact that he had contacts with Western parapsychologists.

On June 13, 1975, Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, urged the United States to agree on a ban of research and development of new kinds of weapons "more terrible" than anything the world has known. U.S. arms control negotiators have tried to find out what he had in mind, but they have not learned anything more than that he meant "some kind of rays," according to U.S. officials.

AT FIRST American intelligence thought by might have been referring to laser beams, or some way of focus-

ing cosmic rays, but they no longer believe this to be the case. They say they are baffled by the reference.

There is no evidence that Brezhnev was referring to something in the field of parapsychology. But it is a possibility that has occurred to some observers, especially because of the vacillating treatment of parapsychologists, the evident involvement of the KGB and what some regard as a traditional Russian interest in mysticism.

The laboratory that Stern worked in was in Novosibirsk's Science City, a complex belonging to the Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences. It was in a separate building, and the door could be opened only by a coded lock with the code changed every week. It was known as "Special Department No. 8" and was referred to as a branch of the Institute of Automation and Electrometry.

Workers were recruited from around the country until there were about 60 persons at the laboratory. The scientists among them were given virtually unlimited funds for elaborate equipment. "It cost many millions," Stern said.

HIS OWN WORK was in theoretical physics. His view was that there might be an orderly system in which

all kinds of energy could be charted, similar to Mendeleev's periodic table of chemical elements.

If such a chart could be discovered for energy, Stern thought, it, too, might be found to have blank spaces that might lead to physical identification of particles to explain the mystery of psychic energy, the "psi particles."

He worked for two years and found nothing. Other experiments at the laboratory involved applying electric shocks to newly born kittens to see whether their mothers, three floors upstairs, registered any reaction through some mental connection; television surveillance of people in a room to see whether they responded to attempts by others several rooms away to send them telepathic orders; studies involving monkeys and electromagnetic fields.

There also were experiments with photon waves, in which frogs' eyes were used as a more sensitive measuring instrument than a machine. One involved putting bacteria on two sides of a glass plate to see whether a fatal disease could be transmitted through the glass. It was reasoned that if this could be done, it would show that photons — light particles — were accounting for some inexplicable forms of communication.

SUDDENLY IN 1969 the laboratory was shut down. Stern said he did not know the reason and did not know if it was really the team's lack of success or the poor quality of its scientific work, but a change of attitude or power in the Kremlin.

He was back in Moscow by 1974. He heard that the military, and particularly the navy, was conducting parapsychology research in Leningrad.

A friend of his, a Leningrad scientist named Gennadi Sergeev, told him he was receiving permission from the navy to open a new laboratory and offered him a job. But the project was canceled.

Friends told Stern the work done at Novosibirsk and planned in Leningrad had been combined in a laboratory in Moscow under the leadership of the KGB. He never learned any more about it.

By the time he left in 1974, he told that all parapsychology had been curtailed except for the secret KGB laboratory. He said he had heard rumors that some "important, very dangerous" research had been discovered, but he commented "I never believed it. How can the KGB do effective research? They need real scientists."

# Woodies

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